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the "greatest of all incentives" for the expansion of manufactures (p. 96) is to leave one utterly unprepared for their continued growth during Reconstruction. It is difficult to think of any economic feature of our life so essentially bound up with the war as this. This omission, perhaps, led to disregard of the important difference in the rise of prices of agricultural and of manufactured goods, which gave the East a disproportionate share of the prosperity of the time, and, as wages rose less than either, afforded opportunity for the accumulation of that capital, the use and abuse of which is described in the chapters on transportation, mining, charity, and amusement. Mr. Fite treats the rise of prices rather cavalierly. The statement that "The rich man could afford cotton at any price, and for those of moderate means there were woolens, silks, and other fabrics", if not made humorously, recalls Marie Antoinette. It seems to the reviewer that Mr. Fite has gone too far in denying the hardness of the times. There is something of the method of the smoothed curve, applied in this case to a period where personal variation was at the maximum. Even if half the army consisted of boys of twenty-two or under, the vast majority had been at work, and for hundreds of thousands of families, in a period of rising prices and economic change, bounties and pay could not make up their loss. In discussing the problem of labor supply, Mr. Fite distinctly overestimates the importance of agricultural labor-saving devices (pp. 6-8). The numbers which he himself gives are entirely inadequate to accomplish the ends he assigns them, and machinery, as yet, performed but few of the farm services. As a matter of fact, purely agricultural counties reached their maximum population about 1870. Child labor, the importance of which is so clearly brought out in statistics of school attendance, is not adequately treated.

The book seems singularly free from errors. The only one observed was that of attributing to the Mormons of this period a method of migration (p. 35) which they had abandoned after disastrous failure a few years before.

CARL RUSSELL FISH.

The Last American Frontier. By FREDERIC LOGAN PAXSON, Junior Professor of American History in the University of Michigan. (New York: The Macmillan Company. 1910. Pp. xi, 402.)

By "the last American frontier" is meant the area beyond the first tier of states west of the Mississippi River, the traditional "Great American Desert". In the present work the author recounts the struggle for this frontier, which he regards as extending in one form or another from 1821 to 1885. Because the book is written in an easy, readable style, catching somewhat of the picturesque atmosphere of the West, one is inclined to overlook a tendency to phrase-making which sometimes leads the author astray. For example, to the frontiersman Indians were no better than "wild beasts"—it would seem of doubtful

propriety for a writer of the present day to adopt such a term, even in metaphor, without qualification or explanation (p. 15)—or again, “the ingenious Jefferson” (p. 18) hardly seems a fair characterization.

In one of the series of *Stories from American History*, which the author has specifically stated in his preface as “not primarily intended for the use of scholars”, too much cannot be exacted. Statements of individual (separate) facts are reasonably accurate, but detailed facts have little place in a work of four hundred pages covering such a large subject, and there are too many general statements that are carelessly made, while some of the generalizations are superficial if not distinctly inaccurate. The introductory chapter is open to most serious criticism in this regard.

For one who is not familiar with the field, the author has rendered a service by presenting in an interesting way subjects that invite to further study, and by devoting six pages to a Note on the Sources. There is a danger, however, that the period covered is so extensive and the space limitation so evident that the professedly sketchy treatment has involved an assumption of a knowledge of facts and conditions unwarranted in the case of the general reader.

For one who has studied the various subjects which are gathered together in this book—routes of travel, means of transportation, westward movement of population, Indian relations, with some consideration of mining—there is little that is new. In fact, the omissions are the more noticeable feature. The influence of Linn’s Bill upon emigration to Oregon, and of the coast trade upon the occupation of California, are illustrations of this in minor matters. But more important is the neglect of larger topics such as the public-land policy, the territorial system, cattle-ranching, and prairie farming, without which an understanding of the subject seems impossible.

The impression gained from reading this book is that the author is trying out his own ideas, and the impression is confirmed by his statement in the preface that he hopes “before many years to exploit in a larger and more elaborate form the mass of detailed information upon which this sketch is based”. The question then inevitably presents itself as to whether there is any such unity in the subject as the author believes to exist. The reviewer thinks there is not. While it may be possible to tell the story of the last frontier in a single connected account, it would seem better to concentrate attention upon the period following the Civil War, and to take other factors into consideration than to attempt to interpret in a one-sided way some of the many elements which are involved in our history between 1821 and 1885.

MAX FARRAND.